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How to measure employees' interests so as to be a more socially-responsible employer: A proposal of a new scale and its validation

JEL Classification: M12

Keywords: *employees' expectations, employees' needs, exploratory factor analysis, Exploratory Structural Equation Modelling (ESEM)*

Abstract

Research background: Many authors emphasize that successful human resource management (HRM) practices align with employees' needs associated with the construct of employees' interests. In particular, the importance of considering employees' interests is emphasized in the process of shaping the architecture of Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SR-HRM) systems.

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Purpose of the article: The aim of the article is to contribute to understanding employees' interests by designing and validating a measure to recognize these interests.

Methods: Through the use of literature sources and expert opinions, the authors developed a list of employee interests. Empirical data collected via the survey method in Poland was used to statistically verify the measurement scale. In particular, exploratory factor analysis and exploratory structural equation modelling were applied.

Findings & value added: This article shows that it is important to create a comprehensive list of interests, as well as validate the research tool used. The newly developed scale has 22 items and five dimensions: support and development at the level of the enterprise, employee participation, support and development at the departmental level, employment security, working conditions and remuneration. It may be used in a variety of companies, as well as in complex research models, and developed further taking into consideration the context of other countries.

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development, as defined by the Brundtland Commission's report "Our Common Future", emphasizes meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This notion has garnered significant attention and has implications for organizations, requiring changes in organizational structure, values and priorities in order to fulfil diverse stakeholders' needs and enhance company economic, environmental and social performance (Nakra & Kashyap, 2023). Human resource management (HRM) plays a critical role in stimulating sustainable performance by creating required employees' behaviours through distinct HR policies and practices. This resulted in development of the concept of Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SR-HRM), which is derived from various fields such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), organizational behaviour and ethics. It focuses on the organization's emphasis on employees, and its efforts to encourage employees to implement CSR policies through the application of HRM policies (Zhao *et al.*, 2021).

Based on the extant literature, López-Fernández *et al.* (2018) listed the following SR-HRM practices:

- the development of transparent, objective, non-discriminatory recruitment and selection, evaluation of employee performance, professional training and careers management, as well as dismissal processes,
- ensuring work-life balance as well as the physical and psychological well-being of employees beyond legal requirements.

Although HRM policies and practices exist objectively, they must be recognized and interpreted by employees (López-Fernández *et al.*, 2018). Many authors emphasize that successful HRM practices align with employees' needs (e.g., Giancaspro *et al.*, 2022; Jose & Mampilly, 2021). These needs and expectations are associated with the construct of employees' interests. An interest is generally defined as something that affects or brings advantages to someone or something (Gupta & Krishnamurti, 2023). Therefore, this study argues that developing SR-HRM should be based on respecting employees' interests, which in turn contribute to sustainable organizational success.

In SR-HRM measurement scales, the practice of incorporating the interests of all employees into business decisions comprise some detailed employees' interests, such as providing them with salaries that properly and fairly reward them for their work, and supporting them in their careers (Latan *et al.*, 2022; Zhao *et al.*, 2021). However, these scales are focused on the recognition of organizational practices rather than employees' interests. In turn, authors who focus their research on general HRM have explored individual interests treated as motivational factors (e.g., Chien *et al.*, 2020; Duan *et al.*, 2021), or narrowly defined sets of interests (e.g., Yang *et al.*, 2021). With this in mind, it is noteworthy that there is, in fact, no definitive list of employee interests that could serve as the basis for conducting research. As a result, there is no uniform tool for studying the interests of employees. It is, therefore, difficult to formulate clear recommendations on the premises and methods for implementing actions that facilitate employers in responding to employee needs and respecting their interests related to the work they carry out.

One of the reasons for this state of affairs may be the fact that the interests addressed here, that is employees' benefits (expectations) from their work, are not static or stable as they are the function of many variables such as personality, experience, culture and the influence of peers (Babalola *et al.*, 2018; Sheehan *et al.*, 2019). It is, therefore, difficult to create a universally applicable list of employee interests. It would appear, however, that irrespective of the above statement, an attempt should be made to specify employees' core interests, which are important irrespective of the indicated variables. The above statement was taken into consideration in determining the aim of the article, which is the creation of a list of employees' interests and the related research tool.

This article uses literature studies and experts' opinions, as well as empirical research conducted among 391 employees working in companies in Poland. The collected research material was subjected to statistical analysis. The correlation dependencies between individual interests were verified. Reliability analysis was also conducted using the Alfa-Cronbach coefficient. Validity analysis covered exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and exploratory structural equation modelling (ESEM).

This article is organized as follows. The second part presents the literature background. In particular, it briefly characterizes the category of employees' interests and the scope of SR-HRM. It also presents how employees' interests were measured in prior literature. The methodology is then presented in the next section. The results section covers presentation of the research instrument, as well as its validation with the use of the above-presented statistical analyses. The results are then discussed, and the article ends with conclusions and limitations.

Literature background

The category of employees' interests

The changeability, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity that characterize contemporary economic reality mean that in order for modern firms to achieve a competitive advantage, they are required to adapt to changes taking place both in their surroundings as well as internally. A priority role in this respect is played by people and their work. This refers both to employers (owners and higher-level management), as well as employees, that is people working in executive positions and lower-level management. Here, it is worth drawing attention to the concept of Employee Relationship Management (ERM), which emphasizes the emotional context of individual relations between the employee and the employer (Strohmeier, 2013).

For a long time, the literature has claimed that employees are the primary stakeholder group (Stuart, 2002). Their role is, therefore, important in the creation and survival of the enterprise. Of particular use here is the monitoring of the scope of employees' identification with changes in the enterprise's identity. However, this requires that employees be treated as they would like to be treated, which is connected to an understanding of their

interests, due to which they have undertaken work in a particular enterprise. This is expressed in the literature through the statement that it is of vital importance to be aware of employees' expectations (Maxwell & Knox, 2009). However, at the same time, researchers point out that the interests of employees, their recognition, respect and, more broadly, the protection of these interests, are often neglected by employers (Razak *et al.*, 2022).

It is noteworthy that the term 'employee interests' is not clearly defined. The indicated interests — according to the definition presented in the introduction — are most frequently described as a manifestation of specific employee benefits related to their work. Some authors, in considering the meaning of the term 'interests', make use of the term 'needs'. This is because needs are not identified with something that is expected, nor an expected benefit. Needs are identified with something that is required to be achieved, assured, and with requirements; needs are identified with the state of the need to possess (Watkins & Kavale, 2014).

Within the science of management, the issue of employees' interests is sometimes raised with reference to the above-mentioned term 'expectations' in relation to work. At the same time, it is emphasized that employees have their own expectations and will work to achieve them, and if this does not occur, will look for work with other employers (Lobanova, 2019).

The issue of employees' interests, understood as their expectations with regard to their employer, is raised in the science of management in particular by researchers focusing attention on researching work motivation. This concerns especially the possibility of triggering this motivation in a particular enterprise by addressing employees' interests. Additionally, research has been conducted that aimed to demonstrate the links between interests and the future search for employment, choice of education and even current position (Harackiewicz & Hulleman, 2010; Hidi & Renninger, 2006), including the achievement of work satisfaction.

It is also worth emphasizing that previous studies usually discussed selected interests. For example, Mackintosh and McDermott (2023) focused on the possibility of negotiating employment contracts, in particular to concluding contracts that flexibly accommodate the needs of employees in terms of working time, working content and remuneration. Other publications relate to the creation of a good working atmosphere, organizational support for employees, securing appropriate working conditions, employee-employer relations, employee-manager communication and the flow of

information upwards and downwards (Devi *et al.*, 2022; Fatima *et al.*, 2023; Guidice *et al.*, 2023; Lin *et al.*, 2020).

An increasing number of companies declare a growth in social sensitivity related to the assumptions of the concept of CSR, and also demonstrate an interest in the issue of employees' interests, including identifying and addressing them (Yang *et al.*, 2021). In some companies, however, closer interest in identifying and actually addressing workers' interests only appears in crisis situations. Furthermore, from a CSR perspective, employees' interests are considered in particular with regard to ensuring safe and healthy working conditions (Cierniak-Emerych & Mazur-Wierzbicka, 2022; Macassa *et al.*, 2021).

Researchers further point out that in order for an organization to be successful, diversity in the expectations and needs of individual employees must be taken into account, including responding to rapidly changing working conditions and social structures (Anastasiou, 2020). This is of particular importance from the social responsibility perspective (Zhao *et al.*, 2022). In this context, Duan *et al.* (2021) emphasized the importance of conducting research on the problem of the right of employees to raise ideas, solutions or concerns about workplace issues that affect their personal interests, as well as the opportunity for them to do so.

The basic assumptions of socially-responsible HRM

SR-HRM can be associated with CSR directed toward employees (Abdelmotaleb & Saha, 2020). However, Zhao *et al.* (2022) argued that SR-HRM not only integrates CSR into traditional HRM practices, but also motivates employees to participate in the company's CSR activities. The definition of SR-HRM proposed by Shen and Benson (2016), which covers detailed HRM practices, is in line with the assumption made by Zhao *et al.* (2022). According to Shen and Benson (2016), SR-HRM covers "recruiting and retaining socially responsible employees, providing CSR training, and taking account of employees' social contributions in promotion, performance appraisal and remuneration" (Shen & Benson 2016, p. 1724). In turn, according to Barrera-Martínez *et al.* (2017), SR-HRM practices are directed towards providing employees with diversity and equal opportunities, employee participation, open communication, transparency and social dialogue, fair remuneration and social benefits, health and safety at work, and work-family balance.

Shen and Zhu (2011) distinguished three components of the SR-HRM system, i.e., labour law-related legal compliance HRM, employee-oriented HRM, and general CSR facilitation HRM. The first component covers the adoption of policies and practices that ensure firms are compliant with labour laws. It emphasizes employees' interests, such as health and safety, which are or should be protected by legal regulations. The second component takes into account employees' personal and family interests, such as developmental opportunities. The third covers motivational activities that should enhance employees' engagement in the company's CSR initiatives.

SR-HRM – by addressing the interests of employees – satisfies both internal and external company stakeholders (Shen & Zhu, 2011). As Aust *et al.* (2019) emphasized, SR-HRM is key not only to satisfying the personal and professional expectations of employees, but also to long-term organizational success. It is also relevant to crisis situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic (Piwowar-Sulej *et al.*, 2023b). It increases social reputation and employer attractiveness (Ehnert *et al.*, 2016). SR-HRM is also treated as one of the subtypes of sustainable HRM, and provides conditions that promote sustainable development (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021a).

At this point, it is also worth mentioning that previous studies found SR-HRM to be equally positively perceived by managers and non-managerial employees (López-Fernández *et al.*, 2018). However, to design the effective architecture of an SR-HRM system (i.e., policies and practices) the interests of employees should be recognized. Changes in employees' interests can be dictated by various circumstances, such as applicable legal regulations, the situation on the job market, the firm's financial situation, and generational changes among workers and the related expectations with regard to work and employers. However, it is necessary to provide employees with a list of universal interests so that they can be measured in a standardized and replicable manner. Previous approaches to the measurement of employee interests are presented in the next section.

Methodological approaches used to recognize employee interests in prior literature

A review of the subject literature shows that a comprehensive approach to the study of specific sets of employee interests is lacking. Firstly, there are studies that used Strong Interest Inventory (Prince, 1998), but this tool is more of a career assessment model, which is intended to help determine, on the basis of a person's interests, which profession he or she fits best into.

Furthermore, the tool associate interests with objects of individual curiosity and is used mainly in the field of psychology and vocational counselling (Leierer *et al.*, 2008). Secondly, most previous studies which examined interest defined as in this article, considered individual interests separately or explored a narrow scope of interests.

For example, Chien *et al.* (2020) examined separately certain work motivators such as financial incentives and enjoyment of work with regard to stimulating employee performance. Duan *et al.* (2021) focused solely on employee participation in decision-making processes, and designed a scale of self-interested voice. In turn, based on factor analysis, the interests of transport industry employees were identified by Yang *et al.* (2021) as one of the five dimensions of CSR. The construct of employee interests included items such as fair employment and promotion, provision of training, health and safety at work, appropriate compensation and counselling for employees who were dismissed. The cited authors also discussed interests in the context of the establishment and membership of workers' unions in Malaysia, highlighting that the country's existing laws discourage union activity, which directly deprives workers of their rights to better working conditions in the workplace. Finally, Hitka *et al.* (2023), using a questionnaire which consisted of 30 closed questions, identified employee preferences in terms of motivational factors, and developed a set of interests as a result of long-term research. The interests included in the questionnaire related to career aspirations (career advancement, competence, education and personal development, individual decision-making, opportunity to use one's own abilities, prestige, recognition, self-fulfilment), finances (basic salary, fair appraisal system, fringe benefits), mutual relations (atmosphere at work, communication at work, close-knit team, attitude of superiors), social needs (company name, company vision, leisure time, regional development, social benefits, company-environment relationship) and working conditions (familiarity with performance, job security, mental effort, job security, physical work demands, work environment, work performance, working time, workload). In the questionnaire, the indicated set of interests was listed in alphabetical order so as to prevent a situation of suggestion in answering related to the order the motivators were presented in. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 was used.

There are also studies which drew on self-determination theory, focused on the construct of basic needs, and which examined basic needs satisfaction among employees. These needs include: the need for autonomy, the

need for belongingness and the need for competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The satisfaction of the basic psychological needs presented above has previously been recognized as a predictor of many positive work-related outcomes, such as employee job satisfaction, well-being, creativity and performance (Coll & Mignonac, 2023; Kaabomeir *et al.*, 2022; Wang *et al.*, 2021; Waqas *et al.*, 2023).

As far as SR-HRM studies are concerned, although researchers in this field emphasized that employee interests matter, they did not examine which interests are important for employees. Most empirical studies in this domain focused on organizational SR-HRM practices. They collected respondents' opinions about employers' practices such as incorporating the interests of all employees into business decisions, and providing all employees with salaries that properly and fairly reward their contributions (two of five items from the SR-HRM scale authored by Maignan & Ferrell, 2004; and adopted by Shen & Zhang, 2019), connecting employees' social performance with rewards (one of six items adopted from Orliczky & Swanson, 2006; and used by many authors; e.g., Zhao *et al.*, 2022; Dong & Zhong, 2021), providing adequate training (one of the items presented by Shen & Zhu, 2011; and used by, e.g., Uddin *et al.*, 2020; and Newman *et al.*, 2016), and promoting prevention, health and security at work (one of the eight policies presented by Barrena-Martínez *et al.*, 2017; and adopted by Barrena-Martínez *et al.*, 2019; equal to one of five SR-HRM dimensions presented by Obrad & Gherheș, 2018; and one of seven SR-HRM practices in the scale of El Akremi *et al.*, 2018; adopted by Jia *et al.*, 2019).

Methods

Development of items

In creating a list of employees' interests and the related research tools, the authors used the inductive-deductive approach. Deductive analysis seeks universality of practices in relation to a literature review (Gelfand *et al.*, 2007), thus reference was made to studies in the literature on employees' expectations and SR-HRM practices. The authors — similarly to Hitka *et al.* (2023) — developed a set of interests as a result of long-term research. The primary basis for the analyses was a set of interests developed in 2009 within the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education research pro-

ject no. N N115 134434). The set of items developed at that time included 18 employee interests, that is: (1) safe and hygienic working conditions, (2) clear criteria for assessing completion of tasks, (3) indefinite employment, (4) influence on the selection of co-workers, (5) remuneration adequate to work duties, (6) employment security, (7) social security protection, (8) training funded by the employer, (9) good atmosphere at work, (10) appropriate flow of information, (11) influence on organization of working hours, (12) assistance of superiors and co-workers, (13) healthcare funded by the employer, (14) creation of trade unions, (15) creation of employee committees, (16) assistance with redundancies, (17) clear rules for promotion, and (18) formal procedures for expressing opinions.

Taking into consideration the changes occurring in companies' surroundings, including the claims made in scientific studies that among the basic employee expectations are adequate remuneration, the possibility of training and development, the opportunity for promotion, safe and hygienic working conditions, social welfare and the quality of professional life (Babalola *et al.*, 2018; Hai-Dong & Yu-jun, 2006; Silverman, 2014; Zhong *et al.*, 2017), in 2018, a correction was made to the list of interests developed earlier, and as a result to the surveys used for researching them. Following Creswell's and Miller's (2000) recommendation to apply inductive logic, use was also made of the opinions of human resource management practitioners, mainly from Poland, Czechia and Germany. Initially, it was assumed that a minimum of five experts from each country (based on rough estimations) would participate in the study. The final number of experts was arrived at based on their willingness to participate in the study. In total, agreement was obtained from nine experts, including five from Poland, three from Czechia and one from Germany.

As a result, apart from the interests covered by a study at the earlier stage of the research discussed here, the proposed research tool included such interests as: opportunity for professional development, influence on the components of remuneration, formal procedures for expressing opinions, participation in management (consultation), and participation in management (joint decision-making). All these are presented in the Results section (in Table 6).

The experts recommended using a five-point scale, where 1 meant 'totally unimportant interest', and 5 – 'very important interest'. Likert scales are considered highly useful in social science research. They offer insights into employees' attitudes, behaviours and perceptions based on respond-

ents' self-reported feelings (Iqbal & Piwowar-Sulej, 2023). However, more detailed Likert scales (e.g., covering seven points) may negatively affect the quality of data by causing a cognitive burden (Iqbal & Piwowar-Sulej, 2023). Therefore, following the recommendation of Revilla *et al.* (2014), the authors used a five-point Likert scale.

Assessment of reliability and validity

The authors wanted to ensure that the scale is valid (it indeed measures the construct of employee interests) and reliable, i.e., it measures the intended construct consistently and precisely. Scale validity can be assessed with the use of theoretical or empirical approaches, whereas the best practice is to combine these approaches. The authors used a panel of experts to evaluate the face and content validity of the construct measures. The items were given to seven academics specializing in human resource management, employed at the universities in Wrocław and Katowice (Poland). At this step, the authors followed the procedure suggested by Farh *et al.* (2004). Thus the “sum-score decision rule,” was applied i.e., the total score for an item across seven judges. The latter is treated as an effective method in predicting whether an item should be included in the scale or not (Morgado *et al.*, 2018). All items were assessed as valid.

Empirical research was then conducted to gather the opinions of employees on the importance of individual categories of interests. The authors employed a research agency to collect data with the use of Pen-and-Paper Personal Interviews (PAPI), which is the most conventional research method among quantitative techniques. It consists of a face-to-face interview between the respondent and an interviewer who reads the question and records the respondent's answers on a paper questionnaire. This type of survey is broadly used in HRM research and is considered to be one of the most effective methods as the respondent is met in person (e.g., Gajda & Zbierowski, 2023; Huang & He, 2022).

The extant literature has shown that $35.70\% \pm 18.8\%$ is an average response rate in social sciences research (Iqbal & Piwowar-Sulej, 2023). The research agency contacted 658 potential respondents, ultimately collecting fully completed forms from 391 respondents working in different companies, thus the response rate for the study was 59.42%. 391 valid responses are a sufficient sample size to validate the research tool in this case, because it is recommended to use either 5:1 or 10:1 as a minimum ratio of respond-

ents to items (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). The study consisted of 37.1% women and 62.9% men. The distribution of the respondents according to age was very varied. One in three respondents was aged between 31 and 40, which was the most numerous group. Only slightly fewer respondents (25.1%) were aged between 41 and 50. A similar percentage of respondents were aged 30 or below (24.8%), while the smallest group were respondents above 50 years of age (17.9%). Among the respondents, 38.4% were employed in production, 37.1% in services and 24.6% in commerce. At the same time, 91.6% of respondents declared that they were employed in non-managerial positions.

The collected research material was subjected to statistical analysis. All calculations and graphs were created using the statistical package R version 4.0.2, and the lavaan package (version 0.6). To assess the reliability, the correlation dependencies between individual interests were verified. Research tool reliability was also determined based on the Alfa-Cronbach coefficient, another common indicator used by social science researchers (Hoekstra *et al.*, 2019).

Considering the recommendations of Tabachnick *et al.* (2007), the authors used the most common statistical method to demonstrate convergent and discriminant validity, i.e. exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Items that do not meet the expected norms of factor loading (same-factor loadings higher than 0.60, and cross-factor loadings less than 0.30) should be dropped at this stage. Given the limitations associated with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which requires that any factor loads exclusively on its target items, unless the researcher specifies what non-target items should be loaded by this factor, Morin *et al.* (2020) suggest relying on exploratory structural equation modelling (ESEM), which combines aspects of both EFA and CFA, and results in improved fit and less strongly correlated factors than CFA solutions, leading to more accurate representation of the data (van Zyl & Veldsman, 2023). ESEM is particularly useful in test adaptation studies when dealing with (potentially) multidimensional constructs. It relaxes the requirement of zero cross-loadings while providing access to information usually restricted to CFA, such as goodness-of-fit statistics, residual correlations and standard error estimates.

Results

Reliability analysis

The first analysis comprised verification of the correlation dependencies between answers selected on a Likert scale to the individual sub-questions (individual interests) contained in the survey (Appendix, Table A1, Table A2 and Figure 1). The p-values in bold for individual pairs of questions indicate statistical significance for the dependencies observed between them. Analysis of the dependencies between the answers to all sub-questions showed that every correlation coefficient is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Among the links worth noting are those between questions P_7 and P_13 (Tau-Kendall correlation coefficient value of 0.684), P_20 and P_21 (0.712), P_20 and P_22 (0.588) and P_21 and P_22 (0.727).

The reliability of the answers on the Likert scale was verified using the Alfa-Cronbach coefficient, wherein it was also tested how the removal of individual questions influenced the value of the indicator. For the entire set of variables, this value was 0.905 with a 95% (bootstrap) confidence interval of between 0.886 and 0.92, which shows that the respondents gave highly consistent answers (a value considerably higher than 0.7). The results for this indicator were also at a very similar level after individual questions were removed, which means that none of them disturbed the consistency of the answers (Table 1).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Before the factor analysis procedure is applied, it is necessary to verify whether all the variables used in the study should be included. First, the descriptive statistics were verified for the individual variables. Accordingly, Table 2 includes all the survey questions taken into account in the exploratory factor analysis that have a standard deviation value (SD) not equal to zero.

The next method used to select variables is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) indicator. KMO verifies the degree of correlation between variables – the closer the value is to 1 the better, and reduction in variables is recommended when the value of the indicator is lower than 0.5. The next step is to calculate the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) for each individual variable. This indicator informs us whether individual variables can be

eliminated from the research before analysis. Low MSA values (that is below 0.5) suggest that the correlations between the variables cannot be described by other variables and should be removed from the study.

All the variables left in the analysis relating to questions about employee interests had an MSA coefficient value greater than 0.5, while the KMO indicator for these variables was 0.89, meaning that the correct variables were chosen to be included in the analysis.

The Bartlett sphericity test verifies whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. If so, it is considered that the factor model is not suitable for the analysed variables. Rejecting the zero hypothesis, which states that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, proves the legitimacy of the analysis. The test result, that is a p-value of <0.001, leads to confirmation that the zero hypothesis should decidedly be rejected in favour of an alternative hypothesis, which tells us that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix (Table 3 and Table 4).

According to the above results, the analysis was shown to be feasible for the selected set of questions.

Exploratory Structural Equation Modelling (ESEM)

Due to requirements relating to the sample size, analysis was carried out for the whole database, as the number of these samples exceeded the minimum size of 200 observations. Below are the results of the model describing individual variables.

Due to the fact that 5 factors were analysed, from which a poorly legible ESEM model graph was obtained depicting hidden variables and the influence of individual items from the questions on interests, below we present the precise result of the exploratory structural equation models for the cases in question:

$$\begin{aligned} F1 = & \sim 0.20456 * P_1 + \text{start}(0.36462) * P_2 + \text{start}(0.29411) * P_3 + \\ & + \text{start}(0.41594) * P_4 + \text{start}(0.42961) * P_5 + \text{start}(0.40431) * P_6 + \\ & + \text{start}(0.33989) * P_7 + \text{start}(0.51314) * P_8 + \text{start}(0.64712) * P_9 + \\ & + 0.64751 * P_{10} + \text{start}(0.55581) * P_{11} + \text{start}(0.54713) * P_{12} + 0.24378 * P_{13} + \\ & + \text{start}(-.09054) * P_{14} + \text{start}(0.20041) * P_{15} + \text{start}(0.12889) * P_{16} + \\ & + \text{start}(0.24833) * P_{17} + \text{start}(0.08254) * P_{18} + \text{start}(0.12114) * P_{19} + \\ & + \text{start}(0.21069) * P_{20} + 0.20656 * P_{21} + \text{start}(0.10394) * P_{22} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 F2 \approx & 0.10677 * P_1 + \text{start}(0.12043) * P_2 + \text{start}(0.18217) * P_3 + \text{start}(0.2257) * P_4 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.01303) * P_5 + \text{start}(0.08035) * P_6 + \text{start}(0.01223) * P_7 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.19766) * P_8 + \text{start}(0.10423) * P_9 + 0.16212 * P_{10} + \\
 & \quad \text{start}(0.08166) * P_{11} + \text{start}(0.15881) * P_{12} + 0.05147 * P_{13} + \quad (2) \\
 & + \text{start}(0.26444) * P_{14} + \text{start}(0.79013) * P_{15} + \text{start}(0.46143) * P_{16} + \\
 & + 0.82929 * P_{17} + \text{start}(0.59017) * P_{18} + \text{start}(0.53794) * P_{19} + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.36135) * P_{20} + \text{start}(0.234) * P_{21} + \text{start}(0.22518) * P_{22}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 F3 \approx & 0.07954 * P_1 + \text{start}(0.04198) * P_2 + \text{start}(0.08838) * P_3 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.10266) * P_4 + \text{start}(0.0354) * P_5 + \text{start}(0.14101) * P_6 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.11868) * P_7 + \text{start}(0.11943) * P_8 + \text{start}(0.01901) * P_9 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.13066) * P_{10} + \text{start}(0.23798) * P_{11} + \text{start}(0.12676) * P_{12} + \quad (3) \\
 0.17634 * P_{13} & + \text{start}(0.26149) * P_{14} + \text{start}(0.11116) * P_{15} + \text{start}(0.19535) * P_{16} + \\
 & + 0.16772 * P_{17} + \text{start}(0.27883) * P_{18} + \text{start}(0.43283) * P_{19} + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.70349) * P_{20} + 0.89191 * P_{21} + \text{start}(0.7631) * P_{22}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 F4 \approx & 0.18153 * P_1 + \text{start}(0.03217) * P_2 + \text{start}(0.43006) * P_3 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.17788) * P_4 + \text{start}(0.08846) * P_5 + \text{start}(0.45617) * P_6 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.76278) * P_7 + \text{start}(0.12974) * P_8 + \text{start}(0.05778) * P_9 + 0.15411 * P_{10} + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.27137) * P_{11} + \text{start}(0.16552) * P_{12} + \text{start}(0.80835) * P_{13} + \quad (4) \\
 & + \text{start}(0.40664) * P_{14} + \text{start}(0.01834) * P_{15} + \text{start}(0.31767) * P_{16} + \\
 & + 0.02225 * P_{17} + \text{start}(0.14662) * P_{18} + \text{start}(0.0595) * P_{19} + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.18915) * P_{20} + 0.14383 * P_{21} + \text{start}(0.23545) * P_{22}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 F5 \approx & \text{start}(0.75598) * P_1 + \text{start}(0.61143) * P_2 + \text{start}(0.32031) * P_3 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.31158) * P_4 + \text{start}(0.45025) * P_5 + \text{start}(0.23677) * P_6 + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.13514) * P_7 + \text{start}(0.20422) * P_8 + \text{start}(0.22486) * P_9 + 0.11588 * P_{10} + \\
 & \quad + \text{start}(0.08993) * P_{11} + \text{start}(0.14586) * P_{12} + 0.07991 * P_{13} + \quad (5) \\
 & + \text{start}(-0.02945) * P_{14} + \text{start}(0.06202) * P_{15} + \text{start}(0.16267) * P_{16} + \\
 & + 0.05931 * P_{17} + \text{start}(0.09477) * P_{18} + \text{start}(0.07927) * P_{19} + \\
 & + \text{start}(0.09619) * P_{20} + 0.09276 * P_{21} + \text{start}(0.02818) * P_{22}
 \end{aligned}$$

Next, the fit indicators for this model were calculated (Table 5), which turned out to be acceptable (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Selection of the optimal number of factors for further analysis made it possible to generate a scree plot. Based on analysis of this plot, those components that should be taken into consideration are to the left of the point in which there is a gentle drop in eigenvalues. As Figure 2 shows, this point occurs after the sixth component, therefore the first five components were used for further analysis. Additionally, a comparison was conducted of the degree of fit of the model for between 2 and 5 factors. This confirmed the

use of the first five components, explaining 54.33% of data variability for further analysis.

After the optimal number of factors was determined, exploratory analysis was conducted (using varimax rotation). Table 6 presents the percentage share of the explained variance and the factorial loadings of these factors. Five factors accounted for 54.33% of the total variance in the primary data (Factor/dimension 1 = 12.05%, Factor/dimension 2 = 11.58%, Factor/dimension 3 = 11.38%, Factor/dimension 4 = 10.99%, Factor/dimension 5 = 8.32%).

Discussion

The aim of this paper was to develop and validate a measurement tool so as to identify employees' interests for the implementation of SR-HRM practices. This aim has been achieved, and the study has developed a scale consisting of five factors/dimensions, namely: support and development at the level of the enterprise, participation, employee support and development at the departmental level, employment security, and conditions of work and remuneration.

The first of the indicated factors was defined as support and development at the level of the enterprise. Employee interests that are expressed by this factor relate to ensuring employees have the opportunity for professional development, creating clear rules for promotion, influence on the components of remuneration, assistance with redundancies, and formal procedures for expressing opinions (Table 6). As the extant literature shows, functioning in the reality of today's world, and the VUCA i.e., volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity that we face in economic practice, requires from employees, amongst others, a continuous change of qualifications and constant improvement of their own potential (Piwowski-Sulej, 2021b). A challenge for both employers and employees alike is professional development and the promotion often related to it. Attention must also be paid to aspects related to remuneration for workers, including using ways, forms and components of remuneration that are beneficial to employees (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). However, as this study shows, the most important interest in this factor is clear rules of promotion (with its loading: 0.826).

The second most crucial of the indicated factors is defined here in general terms as participation. The literature shows that the lowest level of participation (being simultaneously a passive type of participation) includes informing employees about a company's decisions (Cierniak-Emerych & Piwowski-Sulej, 2017). However, under Factor 2, active forms of participation are included, such as consultation, joint decision-making and transfer to the employee of authorization to take decisions (empowerment) (Cierniak-Emerych & Piwowski-Sulej, 2017). Referring to this factor, attention should be drawn to the concept of Employee Relationship Management (ERM), which is an expression of the most mature phase of the personal development function. This concept emphasizes the emotional context of relations between employees and employers. The aim is to achieve high work efficiency as a result of building relations based on the involvement and engagement of employees. It is underlined that a responsible employer is aware of the need to implement individualized motivational action that aims to take into account employees' interests resulting e.g., from their age, gender or family situation (Stotz, 2007), identified as a part of formal procedures for obtaining employees' opinions as one of the manifestations of their participation. Employees should first of all actively participate in decision-making processes at the level of the enterprise (Ullrich *et al.*, 2023), which is reflected in the highest loading of this type of participation in Factor 2 (0.883). Employees' participation creates the basis for appropriate reaction to the unique features of every situation, building an atmosphere of trust in the company (Jang *et al.*, 2023; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). However, a specific role can also be played here by delegating employees with authorization related to decision-making (empowerment) (item loading: 0.739). Allowing employees to take decisions at the level of the enterprise — on condition that it is in accordance with applicable legal regulations and does not disorganize the company — should be conducive to a growth in satisfaction and loyalty, as well as an increase in employee engagement in the tasks assigned to them (Singh & Singh, 2019; Wikhamn *et al.*, 2022). For this to be possible, employers should demonstrate in particular a suitably high degree of empathy. They should not treat empowerment as a loss of their own privileges in the decision-making process at the level of the enterprise. By empowering employees, an employer gains partners who bring a new perspective on mitigating the discrepancies between the interests of internal stakeholders. However, it must be remembered that the employee must not feel that empowerment is merely 'dump-

ing' responsibility on them for difficult or unpopular decisions (Cierniak-Emerych & Piwowar-Sulej, 2017).

The considerations mentioned above are conducive to ensuring employee support and development at the departmental level (Factor 3, Table 6). This support can and should concern respecting such employee interests as: providing employees with training funded by the employer, creating a good atmosphere at work, an appropriate flow of information, influence on the organization of working hours, as well as assistance from superiors and co-workers (Semaihi *et al.*, 2023). The most important interest here is related to the quality of internal communication (flow of information with its loading: 0.658). At this point, it is worth emphasizing that recent research has provided evidence for the impact of communication on employee advocacy, job satisfaction and employees' commitment (Boukamcha, 2023; Lee & Dong, 2023). The third factor (employee support and development at the departmental level) is also directly related to the leadership style practiced by the manager. Many studies have shown that a supportive leadership positively affects the results of employees and of the organization (e.g., (Piwowar-Sulej *et al.*, 2023a; Walk, 2022)). As far as support from co-workers is concerned, recent research has even proven its buffering role against the negative effects of unethical leadership (Hao *et al.*, 2022).

This study also draws attention to the issue of employment security (Factor 4 among the factors included in Table 6), along with its related aspects, i.e.: protection from redundancy, indefinite employment, healthcare funded by the employer, protection of social benefits, and assistance from trade unions/employee committees. The most important interest here is related to the provision of healthcare by employers (with its loading: 0.779), which may indicate employees' increasing consciousness about health-related issues. Considering the remaining interests in the analysed group, it should be mentioned that a key feature of the traditionally understood European employment model is considered to be labour market protection, including employment stability (Cumbers *et al.*, 2023). Nowadays, however, the sphere of employment is increasingly associated with the term 'uncertainty'. This uncertainty affects both being in employment, as well as the circumstances in which it is provided, and the related access to specific social benefits, such as access to healthcare that is free or funded by the employer. The importance of this uncertainty grows in meaning along with the growth in the popularity of so-called flexible forms of employment, including self-employment and employee leasing (Cappelli & Keller, 2013).

This is because terms relating to ‘flexible’ employment relatively often emphasize the negative features of such employment, including uncertainty and instability, low wages and economic deprivation, limited workplace rights and social protection, and powerlessness to exercise legally granted workplace rights (Hur, 2022; Qin *et al.*, 2019).

The contemporary economic reality, connected, among others, to the flexible forms of employment mentioned above, but also to other variables, such as the growth in the use of production techniques and technologies, including the increase in the use of computers at work, as well as the development of remote working, have created new challenges for both employers and employees (Anand *et al.*, 2023). The rapid globalization and digitalization of business (accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic) has even led to the phenomenon of precariat platform workers who perform tasks remotely, based on flexible forms of employment, and for companies located around the world (Dabić *et al.*, 2023). Functioning in such changing realities has made it necessary to verify the actions previously carried out by employers in the field of broadly understood conditions of work and remuneration, which is reflected by Factor 5 in Table 6. Preventing the risk of damage to the health and well-being of employees, both physical, psychological and social, has grown in importance. The latter is expressed, among others, in the creation of safe, hygienic material and non-material elements of working conditions (the most important interest in Factor 5, with its loading: 0.681), as well as adequate remuneration for work completed, and working conditions that are acceptable to all co-operating workers (Cierniak-Emerych & Mazur-Wierzbicka, 2022).

At this point, it is worth comparing the list of interests presented here with the list developed by previous authors. As presented in the theoretical part, the so-called basic psychological needs include the need for autonomy, the need for belongingness and the need for competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The need for autonomy is related to structural empowerment, and is included in item P_22. The need for competence is reflected in interests P_8 and P_15. As far as belongingness is concerned, this study did not focus on the subjective feelings of employees. However, fulfilment of the many detailed interests mentioned in this study (with particular emphasis on P_4 and P_9) has the potential to stimulate employees’ experience of belongingness.

In a study by Yang (2021), the following interests were included: employment and promotion without discrimination, provision of training,

occupational health and safety, and compensation and counselling for employees who are dismissed. The newly developed scale consists of 22 detailed interests, and extends Yang's (2021) list by placing emphasis on different types of employee participation and help from participative bodies, a good atmosphere and communication in the workplace, social benefits, and support from supervisors and colleagues. In turn, when comparing the current list of interests with the list developed by Hitka *et al.* (2023), it should be noted that the cited authors did not develop a scale with factors/dimensions of interests. They only listed the interests alphabetically. The similarities between both cafeterias include: interests related to remuneration for work, fair appraisal, employee benefits, mutual relationships, participation (especially that related to individual decision-making), workplace atmosphere, as well as working conditions and job security. In this study there are 22 interests, whereas the cafeteria of Hitka *et al.* (2023) includes 30 interests. It would seem that a smaller number of interests favours the possibility of research being conducted into them in the future. In addition, this study focused on interests related to the internal workings of a company, to what an employee can be offered, and to the benefits he or she can gain from working for a company. Thus, among the cafeteria of interests, there is no reference to the interests included in Hitka's *et al.* (2023) view, such as the company name, vision, regional development, and the company's relationship with the environment.

As indicated in the theoretical part of this paper, SR-HRM covers three aspects: labour law-related legal compliance HRM, employee-oriented HRM and general CSR facilitation HRM (Shen & Zhu, 2011). Among the many SR-HRM measurement scales are those which focus only on HRM practices such as teaching about CSR and recognition for CSR (Orlitzky & Swanson, 2006). Although researchers specialized in this concept emphasize the need to recognize employees' interests, this fact is not fully reflected in the SR-HRM measurement scales. Some authors ask respondents if their employers incorporate their interests into business processes, however they do not focus on detailed interests (Chanda & Goyal, 2020; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Therefore, the authors of this study would like to encourage other researchers to incorporate the presented five-point scale into research on SR-HRM.

Conclusions

Treatment of all employees fairly and respectfully within the concept of SR-HRM means incorporating the interests of all employees into business decisions. However, these interests must first be recognized. The empirical analyses in this paper have produced a reliable and valid scale for measuring the significance of employees' interests. The presented scale includes five dimensions, i.e., support and development at the level of the enterprise, employee participation, support and development at the departmental level, employment security, and working conditions and remuneration. This scale measures the perception of employees.

The paper significantly enriches research on employees' interests and SR-HRM. It presents a methodological approach to the development of a research instrument. As the scale was developed on the basis of a diversified sample of respondents, it can be used in different industries. Therefore, this study has not only theoretical but also practical value.

Firstly, practitioners may employ the newly developed scale to assess the level of fulfilment of the current interests of their employees. Secondly, practitioners can use this scale as a benchmark to strengthen specific activities related to socially responsible HRM. Thirdly, this study showed the most important interest (with the highest loading) in subsequent groups of interests. Therefore, it also assists HR managers in the identification of priorities in the field of HRM. Fourthly, from the government's perspective, having the research tool presented in this article is important because knowledge of the interests at stake promotes the design of appropriate social support programmes and is also important in the negotiation process conducted at state level with trade unions and/or employers' representatives. A lack of knowledge of employees' interests can lead to the creation of misguided welfare systems at the state level, inappropriate incentive systems at the company level, as well as reduced job satisfaction and well-being at the employee level. Fifthly, this study also offers utilitarian value for educational institutions. HRM practitioners should be equipped with knowledge on what constitutes employees' interests. Academic teachers may employ the newly developed scale to design courses related to socially responsible HRM in their universities.

The research was designed with consideration for its potential weaknesses. The latter open new paths of research, and thus require attention here. Firstly, although people from many countries participated in the de-

velopment of the scale, they come from developed European Union (EU) countries and the research instrument was verified in Poland among Polish citizens. The extent of the fulfilment of certain employee interests is directly influenced by legal regulations at both the national and EU level. This relates mainly to working time, occupational health and safety, and minimum salary (e.g., Directive 89/391/EEC – OSH "Framework Directive", Directive 2003/88/EC – working time Directive 2019/1152/EU – Transparent and predictable working conditions). Therefore, it would also be valuable to assess the scale's reliability and validity in other countries. For example, the Chinese government has just started encouraging public organizations to implement socially responsible practices in the area of employee rights (Zhu & Zhang, 2015). Employees who work in the private sector could state that their underprotected rights are their main interests. Furthermore, differences in the national culture of employees (including religious background) can have an impact on the interests they wish to have fulfilled by a company. Secondly, this paper shows how to measure the perceived importance of employees' interests. In future studies, it would be worth investigating whether there is consistency between the importance of interests for employees and the level of their incorporation into companies, which should lead to higher levels of person-organization fit. The latter has been found to be a strong predictor of numerous positive employee, team and organization-related outcomes (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2023). The authors would like to encourage future researchers to examine the nomological validity of the current measurement scale by considering outcomes such as company financial and social performance (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014). This would significantly enrich studies which examined solely the outcomes of fulfilling the employees' single needs (e.g., flow of information (Boukamcha, 2023) and supervisor support (Hartnell *et al.*, 2023) and the set of so-called basic needs (e.g., Coll & Mignonac, 2023; Waqas *et al.*, 2023)).

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Annex

Table 1. Alfa Cronbach with a 95% confidence interval and its value after the extraction of individual questions from the database

Parameter (Alfa Cronbach) with a 95% confidence interval	
Total	0.905 (0.886-0.92)
P_1	0.902 (0.884-0.918)
P_2	0.903 (0.885-0.918)
P_3	0.901 (0.881-0.916)
P_4	0.901 (0.883-0.917)
P_5	0.904 (0.885-0.92)
P_6	0.9 (0.882-0.917)
P_7	0.901 (0.883-0.916)
P_8	0.901 (0.882-0.917)
P_9	0.903 (0.885-0.918)
P_10	0.901 (0.882-0.916)
P_11	0.901 (0.882-0.917)
P_12	0.901 (0.883-0.916)
P_13	0.901 (0.88-0.916)
P_14	0.907 (0.889-0.922)
P_15	0.902 (0.881-0.917)
P_16	0.901 (0.881-0.916)
P_17	0.9 (0.88-0.915)
P_18	0.902 (0.882-0.917)
P_19	0.901 (0.883-0.917)
P_20	0.897 (0.877-0.913)
P_21	0.898 (0.878-0.915)
P_22	0.901 (0.88-0.917)

Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2).

Table 2. Standard deviations and medians (for Range 1–5)

Item	Parameter	Total (N=391)
P_1	Average (SD)	4.12 (0.93)
	Median (IQR)	4 (4 - 5)
P_2	Average (SD)	4.06 (1)
	Median (IQR)	4 (4 - 5)
P_3	Average (SD)	3.54 (1.14)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 4)
P_4	Average (SD)	3.36 (1.19)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 4)
P_5	Average (SD)	4.42 (0.85)
	Median (IQR)	5 (4 - 5)
P_6	Average (SD)	3.65 (1.01)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 4)
P_7	Average (SD)	3.81 (0.99)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 5)

Table 2. Continued

Item	Parameter	Total (N=391)
P_8	Average (SD)	3.67 (1.13)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 5)
P_9	Average (SD)	4.03 (1)
	Median (IQR)	4 (4 - 5)
P_10	Average (SD)	3.82 (0.99)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 5)
P_11	Average (SD)	3.57 (1.09)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 4)
P_12	Average (SD)	3.86 (1.04)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 5)
P_13	Average (SD)	3.57 (1.14)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 4)
P_14	Average (SD)	2.85 (1.36)
	Median (IQR)	3 (2 - 4)
P_15	Average (SD)	3.24 (1.13)
	Median (IQR)	3 (3 - 4)
P_16	Average (SD)	3.26 (1.16)
	Median (IQR)	3 (2 - 4)
P_17	Average (SD)	3.34 (1.19)
	Median (IQR)	3 (3 - 4)
P_18	Average (SD)	3.42 (1.13)
	Median (IQR)	4 (3 - 4)
P_19	Average (SD)	2.88 (1.3)
	Median (IQR)	3 (2 - 4)
P_20	Average (SD)	2.98 (1.22)
	Median (IQR)	3 (2 - 4)
P_21	Average (SD)	2.64 (1.19)
	Median (IQR)	3 (2 - 3)
P_22	Average (SD)	2.4 (1.2)
	Median (IQR)	2 (1 - 3)

Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2).

Table 3. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) indicator value and Bartlett sphericity test result

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) indicator		0.89
Bartlett test	χ^2	4211.49
	df	231
	p-value	<0.001

Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2).

Table 4. Measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) for each individual variable

Item	MSA
P_1	0.856
P_2	0.871
P_3	0.931
P_4	0.916
P_5	0.85
P_6	0.9
P_7	0.853
P_8	0.924
P_9	0.885
P_10	0.928
P_11	0.935
P_12	0.927
P_13	0.827
P_14	0.806
P_15	0.842
P_16	0.916
P_17	0.85
P_18	0.932
P_19	0.926
P_20	0.918
P_21	0.85
P_22	0.854

Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2)

Table 5. Assessment of ESEM model fit

Indicator	Value	Fit assessment
RMSEA	0.066	satisfactory
CFI	0.946	good
TLI	0.905	good

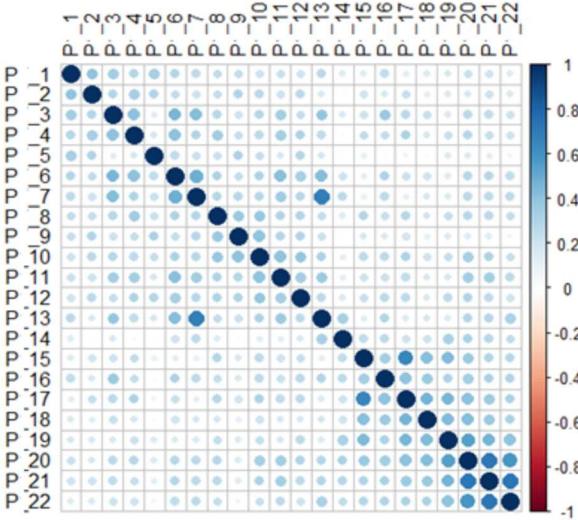
Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2).

Table 6. EFA result

Item	Interest	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
P_17	Clear rules for promotion	0.826	-	-	-	-
P_15	Opportunity for professional development	0.763	-	-	-	-
P_18	Influence on the components of remuneration	0.589	-	-	-	-
P_19	Formal procedures for expressing opinions	0.535	-	-	-	-
P_16	Assistance with redundancies	0.482	-	-	-	-
P_21	Participation in management (joint decision-making)	-	0.883	-	-	-
P_22	Participation in management (transfer to the employee of authorization to take decisions, empowerment)	-	0.739	-	-	-
P_20	Participation in management (consultation)	-	0.734	-	-	-
P_10	Appropriate flow of information	-	-	0.658	-	-
P_9	Good atmosphere at work	-	-	0.651	-	-
P_12	Assistance of superiors and co-workers	-	-	0.526	-	-
P_11	Influence on organization of working hours	-	-	0.510	-	-
P_8	Training funded by the employer	-	-	0.483	-	-
P_13	Healthcare funded by the employer	-	-	-	0.779	-
P_7	Social security protection	-	-	-	0.749	-
P_6	Employment security (protection from redundancy)	-	-	-	0.535	-
P_3	Indefinite employment	-	-	-	0.501	-
P_14	Assistance from trade unions/employee committees	-	-	-	0.368	-
P_1	Safe and hygienic working conditions	-	-	-	-	0.681
P_2	Clear criteria for assessing completion of tasks	-	-	-	-	0.676
P_5	Remuneration adequate to work duties	-	-	-	-	0.455
P_4	Influence on the selection of co-workers	-	-	-	-	0.391

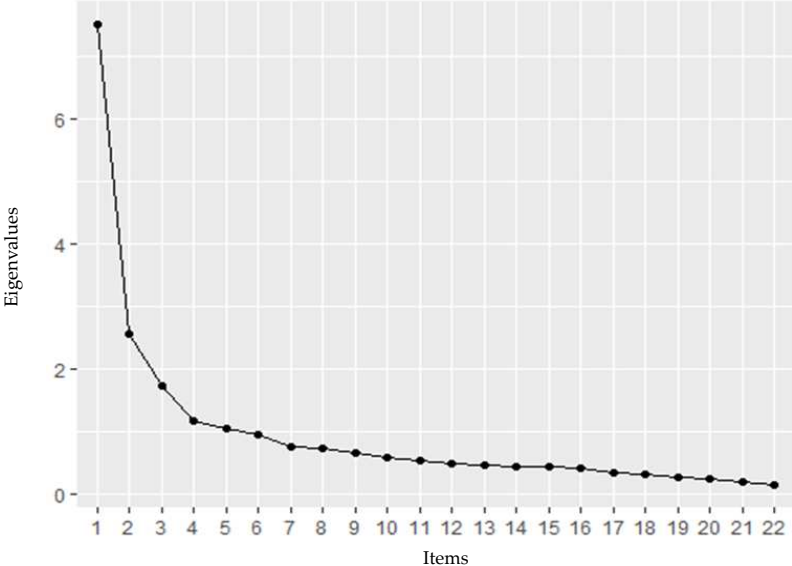
Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2).

Figure 1. Tau-Kendall correlation warmth matrix for survey answers expressed on a Likert scale of 1–5 – total



Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2).

Figure 2. Scree plot



Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2).

Table A1. Continued

	P_1	P_2	P_3	P_4	P_5	P_6	P_7	P_8	P_9	P_10	P_11	P_12	P_13
P_14	0.131 (0.009)	0.005 (0.915)	0.159 (0.002)	0.035 (0.486)	0.017 (0.738)	0.203 (<0.001)	0.252 (<0.001)	0.134 (0.008)	-0.028 (0.579)	0.117 (0.021)	0.110 (0.029)	0.153 (0.002)	0.327 (<0.001)
P_15	0.139 (0.006)	0.184 (<0.001)	0.205 (<0.001)	0.242 (<0.001)	0.098 (0.054)	0.119 (0.019)	0.099 (0.052)	0.280 (<0.001)	0.178 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.196 (<0.001)	0.222 (<0.001)	0.129 (0.011)
P_16	0.248 (<0.001)	0.168 (<0.001)	0.370 (<0.001)	0.240 (<0.001)	0.039 (0.440)	0.305 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.226 (<0.001)	0.159 (0.002)	0.257 (<0.001)	0.214 (<0.001)	0.262 (<0.001)	0.294 (<0.001)
P_17	0.128 (0.011)	0.230 (<0.001)	0.265 (<0.001)	0.302 (<0.001)	0.078 (0.124)	0.219 (<0.001)	0.109 (0.031)	0.273 (<0.001)	0.185 (<0.001)	0.301 (<0.001)	0.245 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.144 (0.004)
P_18	0.159 (0.002)	0.121 (0.016)	0.227 (<0.001)	0.172 (<0.001)	0.045 (0.377)	0.197 (<0.001)	0.179 (<0.001)	0.181 (<0.001)	0.106 (0.037)	0.202 (<0.001)	0.164 (0.001)	0.165 (0.001)	0.183 (<0.001)
P_19	0.174 (<0.001)	0.155 (0.002)	0.157 (0.002)	0.211 (<0.001)	0.146 (0.004)	0.136 (0.007)	0.145 (0.004)	0.239 (<0.001)	0.147 (0.004)	0.238 (<0.001)	0.163 (0.001)	0.259 (<0.001)	0.146 (0.004)
P_20	0.216 (<0.001)	0.179 (<0.001)	0.264 (<0.001)	0.271 (<0.001)	0.143 (0.005)	0.277 (<0.001)	0.268 (<0.001)	0.271 (<0.001)	0.145 (0.004)	0.328 (<0.001)	0.332 (<0.001)	0.293 (<0.001)	0.287 (<0.001)
P_21	0.198 (<0.001)	0.205 (<0.001)	0.250 (<0.001)	0.230 (<0.001)	0.120 (0.018)	0.273 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.265 (<0.001)	0.135 (0.008)	0.300 (<0.001)	0.337 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.288 (<0.001)
P_22	0.136 (0.007)	0.157 (0.002)	0.201 (<0.001)	0.200 (<0.001)	0.059 (0.242)	0.249 (<0.001)	0.252 (<0.001)	0.239 (<0.001)	0.075 (0.138)	0.229 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.190 (<0.001)	0.317 (<0.001)

Source: authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.2).

Table A2. Tau-Kendall correlation for survey answers expressed on a Likert scale of 1–5 – total (continuation)

	P_14	P_15	P_16	P_17	P_18	P_19	P_20	P_21	P_22
P_1	0.131 (0.009)	0.139 (0.006)	0.248 (<0.001)	0.128 (0.011)	0.159 (0.002)	0.174 (<0.001)	0.216 (<0.001)	0.198 (<0.001)	0.136 (0.007)
P_2	0.005 (0.915)	0.184 (<0.001)	0.168 (<0.001)	0.230 (<0.001)	0.121 (0.016)	0.155 (0.002)	0.179 (<0.001)	0.205 (<0.001)	0.157 (0.002)
P_3	0.159 (0.002)	0.205 (<0.001)	0.370 (<0.001)	0.265 (<0.001)	0.227 (<0.001)	0.157 (0.002)	0.264 (<0.001)	0.250 (<0.001)	0.201 (<0.001)
P_4	0.035 (0.486)	0.242 (<0.001)	0.240 (<0.001)	0.302 (<0.001)	0.172 (<0.001)	0.211 (<0.001)	0.271 (<0.001)	0.230 (<0.001)	0.200 (<0.001)
P_5	0.017 (0.738)	0.098 (0.054)	0.039 (0.440)	0.078 (0.124)	0.045 (0.377)	0.146 (0.004)	0.143 (0.005)	0.120 (0.018)	0.059 (0.242)
P_6	0.203 (<0.001)	0.119 (0.019)	0.305 (<0.001)	0.219 (<0.001)	0.197 (<0.001)	0.136 (0.007)	0.277 (<0.001)	0.273 (<0.001)	0.249 (<0.001)
P_7	0.252 (<0.001)	0.099 (0.052)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.109 (0.031)	0.179 (<0.001)	0.145 (0.004)	0.268 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.252 (<0.001)
P_8	0.134 (0.008)	0.280 (<0.001)	0.226 (<0.001)	0.273 (<0.001)	0.181 (<0.001)	0.239 (<0.001)	0.271 (<0.001)	0.265 (<0.001)	0.239 (<0.001)
P_9	-0.028 (0.579)	0.178 (<0.001)	0.159 (0.002)	0.185 (<0.001)	0.106 (0.037)	0.147 (0.004)	0.145 (0.004)	0.135 (0.008)	0.075 (0.138)
P_10	0.117 (0.021)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.257 (<0.001)	0.301 (<0.001)	0.202 (<0.001)	0.238 (<0.001)	0.328 (<0.001)	0.300 (<0.001)	0.229 (<0.001)
P_11	0.110 (0.029)	0.196 (<0.001)	0.214 (<0.001)	0.245 (<0.001)	0.164 (0.001)	0.163 (0.001)	0.332 (<0.001)	0.337 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)
P_12	0.153 (0.002)	0.222 (<0.001)	0.262 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.165 (0.001)	0.259 (<0.001)	0.293 (<0.001)	0.258 (<0.001)	0.190 (<0.001)
P_13	0.327 (<0.001)	0.129 (0.011)	0.294 (<0.001)	0.144 (0.004)	0.183 (<0.001)	0.146 (0.004)	0.287 (<0.001)	0.288 (<0.001)	0.317 (<0.001)
P_14	1.000 (<0.001)	0.247 (<0.001)	0.260 (<0.001)	0.200 (<0.001)	0.204 (<0.001)	0.314 (<0.001)	0.311 (<0.001)	0.278 (<0.001)	0.241 (<0.001)
P_15	0.247 (<0.001)	1.000 (<0.001)	0.333 (<0.001)	0.657 (<0.001)	0.413 (<0.001)	0.438 (<0.001)	0.365 (<0.001)	0.294 (<0.001)	0.277 (<0.001)

Table A2. Tau-Kendall correlation for survey answers expressed on a Likert scale of 1-5 – total (continuation)

	P_14	P_15	P_16	P_17	P_18	P_19	P_20	P_21	P_22
P_16	0.260 (<0.001)	0.333 (<0.001)	1.000 (<0.001)	0.397 (<0.001)	0.368 (<0.001)	0.307 (<0.001)	0.335 (<0.001)	0.310 (<0.001)	0.291 (<0.001)
P_17	0.200 (<0.001)	0.657 (<0.001)	0.397 (<0.001)	1.000 (<0.001)	0.465 (<0.001)	0.454 (<0.001)	0.404 (<0.001)	0.352 (<0.001)	0.309 (<0.001)
P_18	0.204 (<0.001)	0.413 (<0.001)	0.368 (<0.001)	0.465 (<0.001)	1.000 (<0.001)	0.432 (<0.001)	0.420 (<0.001)	0.363 (<0.001)	0.311 (<0.001)
P_19	0.314 (<0.001)	0.438 (<0.001)	0.307 (<0.001)	0.454 (<0.001)	0.432 (<0.001)	1.000 (<0.001)	0.542 (<0.001)	0.466 (<0.001)	0.395 (<0.001)
P_20	0.311 (<0.001)	0.365 (<0.001)	0.335 (<0.001)	0.404 (<0.001)	0.420 (<0.001)	0.542 (<0.001)	1.000 (<0.001)	0.712 (<0.001)	0.588 (<0.001)
P_21	0.278 (<0.001)	0.294 (<0.001)	0.310 (<0.001)	0.352 (<0.001)	0.363 (<0.001)	0.466 (<0.001)	0.712 (<0.001)	1.000 (<0.001)	0.727 (<0.001)
P_22	0.241 (<0.001)	0.277 (<0.001)	0.291 (<0.001)	0.309 (<0.001)	0.311 (<0.001)	0.395 (<0.001)	0.588 (<0.001)	0.727 (<0.001)	1.000 (<0.001)

Source: Authors' own calculations based on R software (version 4.0.).